AMENDMENTS TO THE CLAIMS:

Please cancel Claims 4, 5, 13, and 14 without prejudice to or disclaimer of the subject matter recited therein.

Please amend Claims 1, 3, 8, 10, 12, and 17, to read as follows:

1. (Currently Amended) An image and audio processing apparatus comprising:

image encoding means for encoding image data inputted;

first audio data encoding means for encoding audio data inputted together with the image data by using a first audio encoding method;

second audio data encoding means for encoding the audio data by using a second audio encoding method which is different from the first encoding method;

image encoding setting means for setting the encoding in said image encoding means to encode the image data so that a scene exhibiting a high degree of significance in each of frame images is encoded with a high image quality;

~~audio data encoding setting means for setting an audio encoding method in said audio data encoding means to increase a bit amount of the audio data corresponding to the scene exhibiting the high degree of significance in response to the setting by said image encoding setting means; and~~

audio output determination means for selectively outputting the encoded audio data encoded by said first audio data encoding means and the encoded audio data encoded by said second audio data encoding means; and

data integration means for integrating, in a predetermined order, data of the frame images encoded with the high image quality in accordance with the setting by said image encoding setting means and the encoded audio data outputted from said audio output determination means ~~encoded by said audio data encoding means so as to increase the bit~~

~~amount of the audio data~~ corresponding to the period of the frame images encoded with high image quality, and outputting the integrated data,

wherein said image encoding setting means is capable of setting selectively a part of a region in each of arbitrary n (where n is an integer equal to or larger than 1) frame images of a moving image composed of the image data so that this partial region exhibits a high image quality, and

wherein said audio output determination means outputs the encoded audio data encoded by a predetermined one of said first audio data encoding means and said second audio data encoding means in a case that said image encoding setting means does not effect the setting of the encoding, and compares the encoded audio data encoded by said first audio data encoding means and the encoded audio data encoded by said second audio data encoding means to output the encoded audio data exhibiting higher acoustic quality in accordance with a comparison result in a case that said image encoding setting means effects the setting of the encoding ~~said audio data encoding setting means sets the audio encoding method to increase the bit amount of the audio data corresponding to the period of the frame images in which the setting is done by said image encoding setting means so that the audio data exhibit a high acoustic quality~~.

2. (Canceled)

3. (Currently Amended) An apparatus according to claim 1, wherein each of said first audio data encoding means and said second audio data encoding means encodes the audio data in a case that said image encoding setting means effects the setting of the encoding, and said predetermined one of said first audio data encoding means and said second audio data encoding means encodes the audio data in a case that said image encoding setting means does not effect the setting of the encoding ~~said audio data encoding~~

~~means executes compression-encoding in accordance with the setting by said audio data encoding setting means to set a larger amount of codes to be assigned during the period for which the audio data are processed with the high acoustic quality than during other period for which the audio data are not processed with the high acoustic quality~~.

4-5. (Canceled)

6. (Original) An apparatus according to claim 1, wherein said image encoding setting means makes the setting so as to encode a region, with the high image quality, including an arbitrary object in the image data.

7. (Original) An apparatus according to claim 6, wherein said image encoding setting means makes ROI setting of the region including the arbitrary object, and

wherein said image encoding means executes ROI encoding.

8. (Currently Amended) An apparatus according to claim 1, wherein said image encoding setting means makes the setting so as to encode a partial region of the image data with the high image quality in accordance with a user's instruction for designating an object displayed on a display screen ~~a degree of significance of the image~~.

9. (Original) An apparatus according to claim 8, wherein said image encoding setting means makes the ROI setting in accordance with the user's instruction, and wherein said image encoding means executes the ROI encoding.

10. (Currently Amended) An image and audio processing method comprising:

an image encoding step of inputting a moving image and encoding image data thereof;

a first ~~an~~ audio data encoding step of encoding audio data inputted together with the moving image by using a first audio encoding method;

a second audio data encoding step of encoding the audio data by using a second audio encoding method which is different from the first audio encoding method;

an image encoding setting step of setting the encoding in said image encoding step to control an image quality of encoded image data in accordance with a partial region in each of frame image of the moving image;

~~an audio data encoding setting step of setting an audio encoding method in said audio data encoding step to increase a bit amount of the audio data corresponding to the encoded image data in which the image quality is improved, in response to the setting in said image encoding setting step; and~~

an audio output determination step of selectively outputting the encoded audio data encoded in said first audio data encoding step and the encoded audio data encoded in said second audio data encoding step; and

a data integration step of integrating, in a predetermined order, data of the frame images encoded with the high image quality in accordance with the setting in said image encoding setting step and the encoded audio data outputted in said audio data output determination step ~~encoded in said audio data encoding step so as to increase the bit amount of the audio data~~ corresponding to the period of the frame images encoded with high image quality, and outputting the integrated data,

wherein said image encoding setting step is capable of selectively setting, with a high image quality, a part of a region in each of arbitrary n (where n is an integer equal to or larger than 1) frame images of the moving image, and

wherein said audio output determination step outputs the encoded audio data encoded in a predetermined one of said first audio data encoding step and the said second audio data encoding step in a case that said image encoding setting step does not effect the setting of the encoding, and compares the encoded audio data encoded in said first audio data encoding step and the encoded audio data encoded in said second audio data encoding step to output the encoded audio data exhibiting higher acoustic quality in accordance with a comparison result in a case that said image encoding setting step effects the setting of the encoding ~~said audio data encoding setting step includes setting said audio encoding step to increase the bit amount of the audio data corresponding to the period of the frame images in which the setting is done in said image encoding setting step so that the audio data exhibit a high acoustic quality~~.

11. (Canceled)

12. (Currently Amended) A method according to claim 10, wherein each of said first audio data encoding step and said second audio data encoding step encodes the audio data in a case that said image encoding setting step effects the setting of the encoding, and said predetermined one of said first audio data encoding step and said second audio data encoding step encodes the audio data in a case that said image encoding setting step does not effect the setting of the encoding ~~said audio data encoding step includes executing compression-encoding in accordance with the setting in said audio data encoding setting step to set a larger amount of codes to be assigned during the period for which the audio data are processed with the high acoustic quality than during other period for which the audio data are not processed with the high acoustic quality~~.

13-14. (Canceled)

15. (Original) A method according to claim 10, wherein said image encoding setting step involves setting so as to encode a region, with the high image quality including an arbitrary object in the image data.

16. (Original) A method according to claim 15, wherein said image encoding setting step involves making ROI setting of the region including the arbitrary object, and

wherein said image encoding step includes executing ROI encoding.

17. (Currently Amended) A method according to claim 10, wherein said image encoding setting step includes setting so as to encode a partial region of the image data with the high image quality in accordance with a user's instruction for designating an object displayed on a display screen ~~a degree of significance of the image~~.

18. (Original) A method according to claim 17, wherein said image encoding setting step includes making the ROI setting in accordance with the user's instruction, and

wherein said image encoding step includes executing the ROI encoding.

19. (Original) A storage medium storing a program executable by a data processing apparatus, said program including program codes for realizing an image processing method described in claim 10.

20. (Canceled)